



IJED volume 93 summary

Two groups of articles in volume 93 may signal emerging new directions. One involves the differences between indigenous and non-indigenous students. In an article titled: "Indigenous and non-Indigenous Proficiency Gaps for Out-of-School and in-School Populations: a machine learning approach," Marcos Delprato, Alessia Frola and German Antequera draw on samples from Paraguay, Guatemala, and Senegal using both in- and out-of-school groups of children to assess differences learning. After controlling for independent influences, they conclude that the negative learning gaps remain for both in-and out-of-school children. This illustrates the extent of the indigenous-non-indigenous-driven inequality and discrimination. In a parallel study titled: "Exploring Influences on the Choice of Fields of Study in Higher Education: Evidence from Mexico," Dulce Carolina Mendoza Cazarez points out that the field of study is influenced by skin color, gender, ethnicity, and locality. They are quick to also note that indigenous people tend to gravitate toward non-STEM fields such as education.

The second group involves pedagogy and the definition and measurement of academic achievement. In one article titled: "Learning for Adaptation in 21st Century Skills: Evidence Pupils' Flexibility in Rwandan Primary Schools," Stephen Bayley points out that labor markets demand flexibility, which is a principal objective of 'competence-based curricula'. The paper reports on the measurement of student cognitive flexibility but then concludes that it has little or no association with reading ability. The article is summarized by suggesting that there is a need for a new approach to understand learners' adaptability in resource-poor environments.

In a parallel article titled: "A Closer Look at Reading Comprehension: Experimental Evidence from Guatemala," Daniel Rodriguez-Segura points out that functional illiteracy is still rampant around the world but that too much attention has been focused on literacy skills and not enough attention has been focused on reading comprehension. He is quick to point out the results of a new intervention which supplied three things: (i) in depth teacher training, (ii) consistent pedagogical coaching, and (iii) highly adapted reading and other materials.

In sum, the first group of articles suggests that our field may have paid a great deal of attention to typical issues of socio-economic status, gender, residence, and insufficient attention to influences of being born into an indigenous family and culture. The second group of articles suggests that our field may have defined and measured academic achievement simplistically. Literacy is not analogous to body temperature. It cannot accurately be summarized with a single scale. I suspect that the IJED will be receiving new contributions to both these arenas in the future.

Over the last two years the IJED has published 17 articles summarizing the effect of COVID-19 on education (see Heyneman, 2022 for a

summary). However, none addressed the issue of student dropout once schools had re-opened. This issue is addressed in the article titled: "Returning to School after COVID-19 Closures: Who is Missing in Malawi?". Authors Rachel Kidman, Etienne Breton, Jere Behrman, and Hans-Peter Kohler report data which suggests that 14 % of the school children in Malawi never returned after the schools were opened. Dropouts were more pronounced among older girls, the most disadvantaged, and those already lagging.

Several articles in volume 93 reiterate findings which might be anticipated. Sakil Ahmmed Masters and Mahtab Uddin Masters find that learning gaps in Bangladesh were not evident based on gender but were evident on the basis of region and socio-economic status. Daniel Owusu Kyereko, William Smith, Ishmael Hlovor and Gabriel Keney find that in Ghana, grade repetition is more common among those with irregular attendance, from poorer families, that are overage and those employed as domestic workers. Tommaso Agasisti, Daniel Sanches Montemor and Celma de Oliveira Ribeiro find that in Brazil the more inefficient school systems are situated in low-income regions.

A great deal of attention has been focused on school and university attendance. Rates of university attendance have increased globally. Universities now normally include students with disabilities. But what happens to those students after graduation? Do they experience useful occupations and lead fulfilling personal lives? In the article titled: "Inclusion at University, Transition to Employment and Employability of Graduates with Disabilities: A Systematic Review," Anabel Morina and Gilda Biagiotti review 18 articles on the subject. The reviewed articles point to the characteristics of universities which enable students with disabilities to complete their studies, facilitate their integration, and continue to guide graduates with disabilities during their professional careers.

Because education is an important element of trade (Heyneman, 2001), many countries have tried to position themselves as being 'education hubs', a place where universities from many counties can build campuses and open branches. The IJED anticipates releasing a special issue on 'education hubs.' This special issue is preceded by one contribution in volume 93. In the article titled: "Mauritius as a Developing Education Hub," Jane Knight summarizes the experience in this one country. Her article suggests that the 'Education Hub' concept has been successful in Mauritius for three reasons: (i) the strategies designed to attract and hold providers; (ii) the initiative titled 'Smart City' in which high quality digital resources were universally available, and (iii) the establishment of strong bi-lateral ties with specific high-prestige universities. She reports that these strategies have helped to stimulate a four-fold increase in international student enrollment and augment higher education access for domestic students. The author speculates

about the impact which the education hub may have on the transition of the Mauritian economy, from one based on natural resources to one based on knowledge and human development.

References

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